

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-02 SS-15

NSC-05 TRSE-00 /064 W

----- 015694

R 221436Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9662

INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

FAA BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS PARIS 13016

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: CAVAILLE INTERVIEW ON AIR FRANCE FLEET
RENEWAL

REF: PARIS 12546

1. THIS WEEK'S ISSUE MAY 19 OF NEWSMAGAZINE LE POINT CARRIES UNDER TITLE "BOEING VERSUS MERCURE: SECOND ROUND" AN INTERVIEW WITH STATE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION CAVAILLE ON SUBJECT OF AIR FRANCE FLEET RENEWAL. IN INTRODUCTORY PARA LE POINT NOTES THAT CAVAILLE TAKES "A NEW POSITION, VERY MUCH MORE NUANCED" THAN FINANCE MINISTER FOURCADE'S EARLIER STATEMENT THAT AIR FRANCE SHOULD BE FORCED TO BUY THE FRENCH-BUILT MERCURE AIRCRAFT.

2. WHEN ASKED WHETHER AIR FRANCE WAS FORCED BUY MERCURES AND COULDN'T BUY 737'S, CAVAILLE REPLIED THAT PROBLEM WAS NOT THAT SIMPLE AND GOF ALONG WITH AIR FRANCE WAS CURRENTLY STUDYING SEVERAL SOLUTIONS INCLUDING LEASING OF FOREIGN AIRCRAFT AND CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW
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AIRCRAFT IN A JOINT VENTURE WITH EUROPEAN OR AMERICAN

INTERESTS. CAVAILLE SAID THAT FOURCADE REMARKS HAD BEEN MADE AT TIME WHEN MERCURE SEEMED LIKELIEST SOLUTION, BUT MORE RECENT STUDIES UNDERTAKEN IN COOPERATION WITH DASSAULT AND AIR FRANCE HAD LED TO CONCLUSION THAT OTHER SOLUTIONS SHOULD BE SOUGHT THAT WOULD BE LESS COSTLY AND WOULD BE MORE PROMISING COMMERCIALLY. IT IS NOT JUST A QUESTION OF REPLACING OLD CARAVELLES BUT OF DECIDING ON STRATEGY OF FRENCH CIVIL AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY FOR THE COMING DECADE.

3. CAVAILLE SAID THOUGHT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW AIRCRAFT. SUCH AIRCRAFT, USING GE-SNECMA CFM-56 ENGINE, COULD BE A DERIVATIVE OF THE MERCURE OR ANOTHER EXISTING AIRCRAFT, "EUROPEAN OR OTHER"; IT COULD BE AN ENTIRELY NEW AIRCRAFT, OR A LONG-RANGE DERIVATIVE OF AIRBUS. IT WAS IN CONTEXT OF THIS LONGER-TERM PROBLEM THAT SHORT-TERM PROBLEM OF AIR FRANCE FLEET RENEWAL WAS BEING STUDIED.

4. CAVAILLE SAID THAT WHILE AIR FRANCE WAS NATIONALIZED COMPANY WHOSE TOP OFFICIALS WERE APPOINTED BY GOF, MANAGEMENT NONETHELESS HAD PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING COST-CONSCIOUS AND OPERATING PROFITABLE COMPANY SO AS NOT TO BE A BURDEN TO THE TAXPAYER. GOF, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD TO TAKE THE STRATEGIC DECISIONS AND TO WEIGH "THE CONSTRAINTS OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST"; UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IT WAS NOT SURPRISING BUT WAS RATHER NORMAL AND SOUND THAT THERE WERE OCCASIONALLY DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON CERTAIN SUBJECTS BETWEEN AIR FRANCE MANAGEMENT AND THE GOF.

5. CAVAILLE SAID THAT AT REQUEST THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVTS AIR FRANCE, BRITISH AIRWAYS AND LUFTHANSA HAD BEEN ATTEMPTING DEFINE JOINTLY THEIR NEEDS FOR NEW AIRCRAFT FOR L980'S. RESULTS OF THIS WORK WERE EXPECTED TO BE AVAILABLE SHORTLY.

6. IN CONCLUSION, CAVAILLE STRESSED THAT GOF IS EXCLUDING NO FORMULA FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN ORDER MAXIMIZE CHANCES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW CIVIL AIRCRAFT
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THAT WOULD FIND LARGE MARKET IN THE WORLD. HE ADDED THAT FRENCH WERE PREPARED COOPERATE WITH AMERICAN INDUSTRY, FOR GOF REALIZES THAT NEWLY DEVELOPED AIRCRAFT MUST FIND MARKET WITH US CARRIERS.

7. TRANSLATION OF FULL INTERVIEW FOLLOWS BY POUCH.
RUSH

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT, AIRCRAFT SALES, AIRLINES, AVIATION AGREEMENTS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS13016
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750180-0473
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750527/aaaaaycy.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PARIS 12546
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUL 2003 by SilvaL0>; APPROVED <02 FEB 2004 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: CAVAILLE INTERVIEW ON AIR FRANCE FLEET RENEWAL
TAGS: EAIR, FR, AIR FRANCE, (CAVAILLE, MARCEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006